

Economic Development Commission

Regular Meeting

May 3, 2023

MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Old Lyme Economic Development Commission was held on Wednesday, May 3, 2023.

Present: Jean Wilczynski, John Stratton, Terry Lewis, Mona Colwell, Joe Camean, Scott Smith and MJ DeRisio.

Excused absence: Cheryl Poirier and Wendy Russell

1. Call to Order and Welcome

Jean called the meeting to order at 5:34 PM and welcomed everyone to the Economic Development Commission Regular Meeting.

Jean is Chair tonight in Cheryl's absence.

2. Approval of April 5, 2023 Meeting Minutes

Mona Colwell made a motion to approve the April 5, 2023 Meeting Minutes. Joe Camean seconded the motion. The motion to approve the April 5, 2023 Meeting Minutes passed with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining.

3. Approval of Chairperson's Report

Cheryl sent in a Chairperson's Report in her absence. Jean highlighted the report. (The report has been attached to the minutes).

John Stratton made a motion to approve Cheryl's Chairperson's Report and add it to the minutes. Mona Colwell seconded the motion. The motion to approve the Chairperson's Report and attach to the minutes passed with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining.

4. Economic Indicators

a. Real Estate Update

MJ updated the Commission regarding Commercial real estate. She stated that the marina that was recently on the market has been withdrawn. She also stated that the listing for 83 Hartford Ave has expired and they also decided to take it off the market.

On the residential side she stated that the market is still very active. She stated that 9 properties are active, 24 are on deposit. She stated that the average sale price is just under \$800,000. She stated that properties are still closing over asking price with cash deals.

MJ stated that the Stone house right off of exit 70 is being renovated and will be sold. Once that house is sold the other houses will be built and sold. Those houses will have Connecticut River access and docks.

5. Marketing & Promotion

a. Eastern Regional Tourism District (ERTD) Update

Wendy was not in attendance and will provide an update at her next meeting.

6. Economic Revitalization Efforts

a. Shoreline Gateway

Joe stated that he missed the last meeting of the Shoreline Gateway Committee but did look into blight ordinances. He stated that he looked at 7 other similar size towns to compare.

Joe stated that he did find the blight ordinance that was drafted but never passed here in Old Lyme. He stated that it is not an easy subject and it's hard to not step on people's right on their property.

Joe stated that many towns will put liens on the properties or some will add it to the tax bills. He stated that he would like to solicit anonymous submissions as to what is important to residents. Joe stated he is continuing to work on this topic.

7. New or Additional Business

a. Chamber of Commerce

Jean updated the Commission on the Chamber of Commerce April 26th event. She wanted to thank everyone who participated stating it was a great event. She wanted to give a special thanks to Laurie Walker who was instrumental in setting everything up.

Jean stated that the Old Saybrook Chamber of Commerce had their Executive Director, Marketing Director and many Board Members in attendance. She noted that it was a great opportunity for people to interact and to highlight restaurants in town who participated in the event.

Jean stated that she reached out to the Executive Director of the Old Saybrook Chamber and she was told that 8 people/companies have joined since the April 26th event. Jean stated that at the last meeting the EDC voted to join the Old Saybrook Chamber of Commerce and that is moving forward.

b. Other New Business

John spoke about the high speed rail that was considered dead. He stated that the high speed rail is still very much alive as both Senator Chris Murphy and Governor Lamont have recently spoke about it.

MJ asked what a high speed rail would actually do to help economic development as there would be no stops in Old Lyme, Old Saybrook or New London.

The Commission discussed bringing this up with representatives Devin Carney and Martha Marx.

8. Public Comment

Lenny Corvo commented sharing his concerns about parking costs for the upcoming summer. He noted that although there are now hourly parking charges, if a visitor parked in a town lot for nine hours the cost would be \$85 plus sales tax and transaction fees. He stated the transaction fees are not transparent to parkers. He asked that the EDC review the new parking costs and make a statement to the Board of Selectmen which has approved the parking fees.

Carolyn Miranda commented regarding the parking issue at Sound View, and noted concern about more parking when the beach is already crowded blanket to blanket. She also requested an update on the Shoreline Gateway Committee's consideration of requesting a zoning moratorium for the area while it develops its work. Also looking forward to public information on the survey update.

9. Adjournment

MJ DeRisio made a motion to adjourn. Mona Colwell seconded the motion. The motion to adjourn passed with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstaining.

The meeting adjourned at 6:41 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:

Jennifer D'Amato

Records Clerk for the Old Lyme Economic Development Commission

Addendum

Town of Old Lyme Chairperson's Report • Tuesday, May 2, 2023

Submitted by Cheryl Poirier

I am sorry to miss the regular meeting of the OL-EDC tomorrow evening. Jean Wilczynski will chair the meeting in my absence. An agenda has been sent separately. I have prepared the following update. Please consider voting to enter this report into the minutes.

Quarterly Business Update Newsletter: We have received positive feedback on our first quarterly update. I wish to thank you all for your input and especially Mona for helping with the setup and Scott for troubleshooting the contact list issues that I continued to face. The update was shared via:

- EDC Mailing List of businesses in town
- First Selectman's Newsletter, and encouraging people to sign up for "Notify Me's"
- Town Facebook Page
- Printed copies were to be available at the Chamber of Commerce Event
- Remaining printed copies should be made available in the Town Hall foyer.

We will want to begin to build our next update, which should come out during the summer months, perhaps right before the Midsummer Festival so that we can distribute it at our table.

Seasonal Openings: I promoted the seasonal openings opportunity through both the newsletter and Town Facebook page, and have not had any direct replies from businesses yet. We can likely put this together with a few phone calls and get it up on the website very soon.

Virtual Job Fair: I've received no inquiries from businesses regarding the virtual summer job fair idea. This would likely take some leg work on an EDC member's part. Is this something someone would like to take on this year? Or should we consider it for next year instead with a further lead time?

Chamber of Commerce: Jean will report on the Chamber of Commerce event, but I just want to share my thanks for those who planned and executed this well-attended event. Per the last EDC meeting vote, the EDC is joining the Saybrook Chamber.

Two New Businesses: As I noted in an email earlier this month, there are two new businesses taking space at 55-57 Hatchett's Hill (the building on the corner of Four Mile River and Hatchett's Hill). They are Strategies, which holds training and coaching events for Hair Salon owners; and Freespace, a consulting firm of sorts that helps business organizations optimize their office space and real estate. I will be reaching out to both organizations to welcome them to Old Lyme.

Sound View/Shoreline Gateway: The owner of 52 and 56 Hartford Avenue (includes the former El Morocco) has listed his property at \$750,000. The owner very recently cleared a few of the buildings leaving the former El Morocco standing. The owner's real estate agent presented the property information to the Board of Selectmen at its Monday night meeting.

Monday night the First Selectmen also approved parking prices for the Town Sound View Parking Lot and Hartford Avenue Street Parking. Town residents can use their beach passes to park either on the street or in the lot. Parking fees are charged from 9am to 6pm.

Weekend & Holidays: \$7.50 for the first two hours; \$9.50 for each additional hour

Weekdays: \$7.50 for the first two hours; \$6.50 for each additional hour.

Parking fees subject to CT sales tax and certain transaction fees.

Parking Kiosk payments will be made via a smart phone app (many other towns are adopting this for their commercial districts) and Master Card/Visa credit cards – Cash will not be accepted.

It seems to me there is some chatter around town that Sound View parking is going over \$75 this year, this does not seem to be the case based on the above approved rates. A weekend six hour (max) charge would be $(7.50 \times 2) + (9.50 \times 4) = \53 plus CT Sales tax.

I will update you all next month on the various marketing efforts we have underway. Thank you for your continued commitment to the economic health of Old Lyme.

Sincerely, Cheryl Poirier